

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Previously presented) A method of preparing a reinforced core structure for a product to be formed by a resin transfer molding process utilizing a resin, the method comprising:

(a) applying fibers over a core that extend beyond the final finished line of the product to be formed;

(b) applying a tackifier solution only to the fibers located at the location of the final finish line, the tackifier solution comprising a reduced concentration of the resin utilized by the product to be formed by the resin transfer molding process;

(c) consolidating the tackifier solution only at the location of the final finish line; and

(d) cutting along the final finish line.

2. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the tackifier solution comprises resin to be used by the resin transfer molding process diluted by a solvent.

3. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein consolidating the tackifier solution at the location of the final finish line comprises wrapping shrink tape around only the portion of the fibers located at the location of the finish line and heating the shrink tape to apply heat to the tackifier and cause the shrink tape to constrict.

4. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 3, wherein the tackifier solution comprises resin to be used by the resin transfer molding process diluted by a solvent.

5. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein cutting along the final finish line comprises:

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placing the core, including the applied fibers and tackifier, in a frame such that the portion of the core, applied fibers, and tackifier that extend beyond the final finish line lie outside of the frame; and

cutting the core, including the applied fibers and the tackifier, along the final finish line.

6. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 5, wherein the tackifier solution comprises resin to be used by the resin transfer molding process diluted by a solvent.

7. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 6, wherein locally consolidating the tackifier solution at the location of the final finish line comprises wrapping shrink tape around and over the portion of the fibers located at the location of the finish line and heating the shrink tape to apply heat to the tackifier and cause the shrink tape to constrict.

8. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 7, wherein the tackifier solution comprises resin to be used by the resin transfer molding process diluted by a solvent.

9-12. (Canceled)